

W r e s t l i n g P e r s p e c t i v e

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Memories Of Our Innocence

By - Paul MacArthur

Remember the first time you saw wrestling on television? Remember it was something new, something different, even if you weren't sure if you liked it? Remember sitting through a wrestling program and being awed by the characters? Remember seeing your first angle and wondering how it would turn out? Remember when you saw a wrestler with a mask, you wondered what he looked like underneath? Remember finding a wrestler whom you related to? Remember the first heel you wanted to see beaten into the canvas? Remember seeing your favorite babyface getting screwed by a heel for the first time? Remember how you felt? Remember when your favorite babyface turned heel? Remember the first time you wanted to see a heel win on television? Remember?

Remember going to the matches for the first time? Remember trying to get near the ring so you could see the wrestlers up close? Remember waiting outside in the parking lot just hoping you could get an autograph or shake their hand or just see if they could actually fit into a car? Remember the first time you touched the ring? Remember wanting to go to the matches because they did an angle and you had to see its resolution? Remember when you went to the matches so you could be entertained? Remember when you didn't rate matches on an arbitrary five-star scale? Remember when it was just plain fun to see who won and lost live? Remember when you wanted to see the matches because the hype for the house show really interested you? Remember when you didn't go to the matches to tell everyone around you how much you knew? Remember when you didn't cheer heels because they represented evil? Remember when the match had meaning, not because the work was good, but because the heel was justly beaten? Remember when you cheered a heel at the matches and reveled in the reactions of the "marks"? Remember the first time you chanted "boring?" Remember the first time you chanted, "We want blood?" Remember the first time you shouted out a "smart" remark? Remember?

Remember the all-time greats, not the great workers, but the guys you wanted to see as a kid? Remember how it felt to see your favorite wrestler lose? Remember how it felt to see your favorite wrestler get revenge? Remember how it felt when your favorite wrestler left the territory and you couldn't see him anymore? Remember wondering what happened? Remember wanting to see a heel beaten to a pulp? Remember empathizing with a wrestler to the point where you were angry when he was screwed by the heels? Remember how that affected your day? Remember how it felt to see Ted DiBiase piledriven by Terry Gordy on the concrete, Jimmy Snuka hit by Roddy Piper with a coconut, or Bruno Sammartino lose to Ivan Koloff? Remember when you would say something other than, "Man, what a great angle?" Remember?

Remember when your friends and parents told you wrestling was fake? Remember your indignation with such blasphemy? Remember telling your friends you would believe wrestling was fake if they could break your figure-four leglock? Remember that they never could? Remember when you started to think wrestling wasn't real? Remember when you finally admitted to yourself it might be "fake?" Remember why you decided to still follow the sport? Remember?

Remember your first Apter mag? Remember looking at the pictures of wrestlers in other territories and thinking they must be something special? Remember when you thought the articles and interviews were real? Remember looking for the photos of your favorites? Remember the pictures with the blood? Remember apartment wrestling? Remember reading their ratings and thinking they really meant something? Remember the first time you read a newsletter? Remember?

Remember when there were good guys and bad guys, and a babyface was a shaving cream commercial, a heel was part of your shoe and a shoot was something a television crew went out on? Remember when you thought the only time wrestlers cut themselves with razor blades was when they shaved? Remember the first time you saw a wrestler sell a missed punch, call a spot, or reach for a razor blade? Remember looking for the very same thing once you realized it was part of the business? Remember?

Remember when you subscribed to just about every newsletter in sight because you thought you discovered something new? Remember making new friends across the country who had the same love for the sport you did, even if it wasn't what we thought it was when we were kids? Remember when your Saturday was ruined if you didn't get the *Observer* in the mail? Remember when you read your first interview with someone in the business and they discussed the business as if it were a work? Remember when the news was what happened in the ring, not in the courtroom? Remember?

Remember when you cared about who won more that you cared about workrate?

Remember when your favorite wrestler won by DQ and you didn't feel screwed; even if he didn't win the title? Remember when the headlock was more than just a resthold? Remember when an angle was good if it got your attention, not if it was "politically correct?" Remember when if a man took a Cactus Jack-like bump on the concrete, the match would have been over and there would have been a stretcher-job? Remember when a match didn't need three toposes to be exciting? Remember the first time you said, "That match sucked," not because who you wanted to win didn't, but because the work was sloppy or boring? Remember the first time a screw-job finish really made you angry? Remember when you didn't expect a wrestler to nearly kill himself to make a match exciting? Remember when you didn't give a flying fat rat's fanny about what happened in Japan or Mexico because you couldn't see it or pronounce their names anyway? Remember?

Remember when Dusty Rhodes was something more than a burnt-out booker who pushed his son, Ole Anderson was a feared heel who could give an interview, Tony Atlas pressing a man above his head was something amazing, Bruno

Sammartino and Lou Thesz were more than grumpy old men, Bill Watts was the patriarch of Mid-South who could promote, Ric Flair had more than eight moves in his arsenal, a wrestler with a body-builder physique was something unusual, Flair vs. Ricky Steamboat was something more than an eighties revival tour, Gordon Solie was the best announcer in the business, Barry Windham and Mike Rotunda looked like they were going to be the next Flair and Steamboat, and Tommy Young's "1, 2, not quite 3" count was the best in the business? Remember?

Remember when you could only see one wrestling program each week, pay-per-views meant something, house shows were exciting, and titles had prestige? Remember when you changed your social schedule or stayed up 'til one in the morning because you couldn't miss wrestling, you were angry if wrestling was pre-empted or you didn't get home in time to see it, you never wanted to miss a title change and you genuinely cared about the characters? It was exciting, remember?

Remember the last time you went to a wrestling match and enjoyed it like a kid? Remember?

Sidelines

Thanks To Evan Ginzburg, Seth Friedman, and Georgiann Makropoulus for the plugs. They are most appreciated as always.

Next Issue features part III of our exclusive Missy Hyatt interview, the Phantom looks at Big Jim Londos and more. If your subscription ends with this issue, renew today.

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In Perspective: Missy Hyatt

During Missy Hyatt's nine-year career in wrestling, she has been part of some of its most successful promotions, and has managed to survive in a business known for its high burnout. During part II of this interview, Missy reflects on different periods in her career, the Playboy offer, unionization of wrestlers and suggests how she would run a wrestling promotion in 1994. Part III of this phenomenal interview will appear in our next issue.

Wrestling Perspective: Your start was with World Class and basically you were an instant hit.

Missy Hyatt: I guess.

WP: When John (Tatum) went to the UWF, you went with him. What was that experience like?

MH: OK, working for Dallas was one of the best times I ever had. Fritz Von Erich paid me the best anyone has ever paid me. The trips were short. I enjoyed, I looked forward to TV. It was a whole new start. Considering how young I was, I was about 20 years old. God I just told you my age. Ow! I was 14 years old. Everything was new and being on TV, it was so cool to go to a mall. The TV was so strong in Dallas that I'd be going to malls, shopping around and I'd have the young little girls follow me around to see what I was buying and I thought that was really cool and I enjoyed that. I have a very hard time expressing myself one-on-one. I only have two girlfriends in my life. I have a lot of guy friends, but I have a very hard time expressing myself in a one-on-one situation. But I can express myself in large groups. I don't mind standing up in the center of an audience. I really enjoyed that. In going to the UWF, it was very exciting because I looked forward to TV, because Ken Mantell, we were doing such exciting things. But I did not know the business. I did not understand how cut-throat, how lying scumbags bookers and the people

that run it are. How they have no balls. How they say they are men, and please quote me when I say they have no balls when it comes to telling people what is going on. I learned that with Eddie (Gilbert) and Eddie taught me a lot about the business, about the psychology of the business. That's probably the only reason why I stayed in it so long.

WP: Eddie certainly knows the business.

MH: Eddie knows the business, but Eddie can't practice what he preaches. Eddie has probably got one of the smartest minds there is and he does. He has absolutely one of the smartest minds there is, but if he would just... a lot of creative people get sidetracked and it's a shame because...

WP: Self discipline?

MH: No, it's self-destructive. Very, very talented people, there's a fine line and Eddie's very smart when it comes to TV. But you know what? I worked for him in Continental and he was the boss and he lied to me. If he'd lie to his own wife, he'd lie to anyone. But they all will. I've never had one person ever be honest with me in wrestling.

WP: During the entire nine years?

MH: In the entire nine years.

WP: At least it's a consistent track record.

MH: At least it's consistent, you always know they're lying to you. If they tell one thing you know something else is going to happen.

WP: What did you think of Kerry and Kevin at the time?

MH: Kerry and Kevin are wonderful. I think Kerry... I think that whole family situation is horrible. That is a thing right there, your dad is very successful and trying to live in his footsteps. There's bound to be problems. You know you look at yourself, we all think what other people perceive us

to be. If we're not that and we can't live up to that, it really hurts a person. I mean, I'm sure there's a lot of people out there that if they saw me when I woke up in the morning, woohooo. I sure don't seem what I look like on TV. I could scare a few people. We are not what we are perceived to be and especially your parents. My parents hate professional wrestling. My mother has told me for the past nine years. When she found out that I was quitting and not going to do it anymore, she thanked me. She said it was the worst thing. She's always told me, "Why can't you be nice on TV?" I go, "Mom, I would not be good if I was nice on TV. I would not have lasted this long. I cannot be nice on TV." She goes, "Well, all of our friends see you and you're so mean and nasty on TV. Why can't you be nice?" So when I explained to my mom, I go, "Mom, you know, duh, hello mom!" So when I told her the contract's not getting renewed, she goes, "Oh, great. Do you want us to help you pack your stuff so you can move to New York?" (laughs) Okay, thanks.

WP: You are definitely out of the business for good at this point?

MH: Yes.

WP: You would not consider an offer from Titan.

MH: No.

WP: Not at all.

MH: Not at all. I've had offers from a lot of places.

WP: When you did a quick stint with Titan, I believe like one week...

MH: (laughs) Yeah, it was more like a month. Okay, a month and a half. It was a month and half. It was six weeks.

WP: What were your impressions of that?

MH: The most awesome put together... Okay, let me relate this. How they work is

so classy compared to the way WCW works. But, then you go to *The Wonder Years*, to an ABC show. Oh, my dog, Sasha Girl would be with Jason (Hervey) on the set. She would have her own chair. You could not pick up anything because it's union. I would stand there and I didn't even work for the show, but because I was Jason's girlfriend, I go, "Oh, I cut myself." I would have about four Band-Aids in 30 seconds. Jason would go, "Oh, I'm sweating." Two people would be over there. one with a blow dryer blowing him, the other rubbing his feet. I mean they treat their people like stars. Oh, my God, Jason had a dressing room that was great. He would whine and complain about stuff. I'm going, "Jason, you've never been to the Will Rogers Center where there was one room that was half this size with one toilet in the middle and you were expected to put a chair in the corner and look at the corner for three and half hours and have to go dress out in a car." I said, "Jason, you've never had to work." There is such a big extreme between the entertainment business, considering wrestling is like scumbag entertainment and there is such a bigger extreme. Like movies, oh my God, we'd be on a movie set. If you want to judge movies the way they treat you, you get a trailer! (laughs) You walk out there, "Oh my God, I thought you were going to leave me today. I'm so upset." Cut, let's do it again. "Oh my God, I thought you were going to leave me today. I'm so upset." Do it again. Do it again 10 to 20 times and you go back to your trailer, have a Diet Coke, sit around, let someone give you a massage. I would sit around *The Wonder Years* set and go, "Yo, I could produce this show." It costs \$1,000,000 an episode. If we did it with a wrestling budget, oh I could do it for five grand. I could have done *The Wonder Years* for five grand. First, I would have fired two-thirds of the people which they didn't need. Right? I could have still given them a quality show, just in wrestling you learn how to do things cheaply.

But, see another thing's, Ed O'Neill, when he was getting paid \$25,000 a week at Fox and he went in to the producers

at Fox and said, "Either you give me \$250,000 an episode and three percent of the show or I'm walking." They go, "Yes sir, yes sir." If one of the wrestlers, because there's no union, would walk in and go, "Yo, I want maybe \$90,000 a year because my wife's having another baby." They go, "Blow you and leave," because they can make whoever they want (a star). The one thing that wrestling's lacking in a big way and what Turner, I don't know how he gets away with it because he's the cheapest scumbag on the Earth, is he's not AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and he's not union.

WP: Even with CNN?

MH: Even with CNN he is not AFTRA. Because Georgia is a "right to work" state. But AFTRA is after him because ESPN, every other cable network is AFTRA and one day he's going to have to turn AFTRA and when he does, then the wrestlers are going to be able to get benefits for health insurance and what's it called when you get old, a pension. Because you know we ain't having social security because the government blows. So social security is fixed. Oh, you don't want to talk about politics, don't even get me started on that.

WP: Start, start, go ahead.

MH: Oh, no. No, you don't want to know what I think about this country (laughs).

WP: If Turner went AFTRA, theoretically...

MH: Theoretically the wrestlers would have a better way of life and everyone at that company would have a better way of life.

WP: Now could the wrestlers, by virtue of what they do become AFTRA themselves?

MH: They should be. They should be AFTRA. We're on a television show, we should be AFTRA. How we're getting away with it, I'll never know. How Turner gets away without being AFTRA, I'll never know. You know what they need, all the people need to get together and call in AFTRA. But they won't because out of every one wrestler that says, "I want to be AFTRA," there's 300 that want to take his

spot. If he ever raises one hand, they all jump down him and he's gone and he's blackballed and he's out there. And there's cliques. You've got your Florida clique. You've got your Minnesota clique. You've got your little cliques and that's how it is. It's all nepotism. It's all cliques. It is.

WP: Nepotism in WCW?

MH: Oh yeah, like it doesn't show. Like, "Hi my name is Bill Watts and my son's going to be the star." It doesn't matter that his pants hang four inches between his crotch, he has no body and he can't interview and no girl I know would want to go out with him, but oh, he's going to be a star.

WP: Whatever Bill says.

MH: Whatever Bill says because Bill's the boss. Nothing bad about Erik, because I like Erik. Erik's a cool kid. He's just... and Dustin (Rhodes) is also underrated. Dustin is one of the best wrestlers there is, but because he's Dusty's son, he gets a lot of abuse for it. It's because other people that have pushed their sons down their throats have sucked, they just expect Dustin to stink. Dustin can cut an interview. Dustin's believable and Dustin can damn sure work a match. Dustin's awesome.

WP: It seems like Dustin is respected as far as just being a decent individual.

MH: Oh, yeah. Dustin's a nice kid. Dustin's a very nice guy. Why am I calling him a kid? I'm not that old. So do any hockey players read your newsletter?

WP: Not that I'm aware of.

MH: Oh, I met all of them from West Point at the airport on Sunday. Aww, I sent them a calendar. They needed it because they were on a road trip and lost in a big way.

WP: Speaking of the calendar, were the Playboy rumors true?

MH: Yep, sure were. All they wanted me to do was topless. It's not like you haven't seen that before on Saturday morning with a low cut shirt. You know, big deal. Yeah, I was going to get paid some money, \$60,000, and the cover.

WP: And the cover?

MH: Cover. First Lady of Wrestling. We were going to do a cover thing with me sitting in the ring. We had it all laid out. I gave the numbers, I gave the lady who I needed to talk to, to Bob Dhue. And Eric Bischoff, "Oh, we're down in Disney, we better not do that. Not good for the relationship with Disney." Okay, Shannon Doherty's sitting on the front showing her breasts. Okay, Miss Touchstone. Oh, we can have Hulk Hogan in a tutu, okay. In a fag tutu. Pepsi can do Michael Jackson, "I'm a child molester," okay. It's so okay for other people to do things. You know what I'm saying?

WP: So they actually did prevent you through some clause in the contract?

MH: Yeah.

WP: I presume the offer is no longer good since you left wrestling.

MH: Well, I haven't even approached them because I don't want to be associated with wrestling anymore. Missy Hyatt no longer... There is no more Missy Hyatt.

WP: If you had to do it all over again with wrestling, would you have done it?

MH: Yeah, of course. There's not one thing in my life that I have ever done that I would regret. Except one thing.

WP: That would be?

MH: That would be if I'd known Gino Hernandez would have died, I would've loved to have kissed him before he died because I thought he was sexy. Poor Gino. God, he was gorgeous. He got me hooked on Louis Vittron luggage. I started that craze. I had the Louis Vittron luggage when I went to New York and then everyone in New York had to get Louis Vittron luggage. I'm the one who started it and I really didn't start it. Gino Hernandez, God rest his soul, he was the first guy I ever saw, he came walking into the dressing room in '85 when I saw him and he had that Louis Vittron over his shoulder. I'm like, "Oh, my God, this guy is so cool." There was a rumor about Gino that he never wore the

same underwear twice. That he threw his silk underwear away. I was just thinking about, oh God, one day I'd love to just be in his little drawer and have him open it up and go, "Hi, your underwear's not here, but I am." It never happened. That's the only thing in my life that I regret.

WP: Gino had style.

MH: Well, what happened was right before he died, I was going to work with him, but John ixnayed it. I overheard them talking about it. They wanted to do a thing that I left John for him and they were going to turn John babyface and all this other stuff. Poor Gino had to die. I'm so mad I still didn't kiss him. You know a friend of mine told me, Rick Hazzard the referee, one night we're talking about it in Alabama and he said, "I bet if Gino would've known that he'd just come alive right now." Well, hell, he can just come right along and I'd give him the old kiss (laughs). I said, "At least I know I've got something waiting for me in heaven when I get there." (laughs) Because that's the first thing I'm going to do. I'm going to look up Marilyn Monroe and Gino Hernandez and then I'm going to check out and see if Kerry's got a foot or not (laughs). There's a couple things I'm going to do when I get up there.

WP: At least you have your priorities in order.

MH: I've got my priorities. "Yo, Gino, come here and (kiss me). Yo, Marilyn, let me see, oh, you're gorgeous. I love you babe. Let's do lunch. Yo, Kerry, (laughs) so you have a foot or not? (laughs) Hey is that a foot or are you just happy to see me? (laughs)

WP: You said they considered doing an angle where you broke up with Tatum and you were going to be with Hernandez. Eventually they did the same thing with you and Gilbert, only it was legit.

MH: Yeah, it was legit and it had to be because I fell in love with Eddie. It was so hard working with John because Eddie and I were together and John and I were in the process of breaking up. So it was probably

the only angle on television in wrestling that was real. They never did even have them work any matches because they were so scared because John was upset at us breaking up and John would be mean and spit at me in the ring and Eddie would get mad and we'd all come back in the dressing room and we'd all be yelling at each other, acting like immature love children. We were all like, "I have a broken heart, but I love you now and I don't love you anymore and I'm real jealous because she's leaving me for him." You know that kind of immature high school garbage. That's what went on.

WP: On television and behind the scenes.

MH: Oh what went on behind the scenes was so much more eventful than what went on, on television. Oh, if they would have played that out. You know but it probably would have gotten so tired. I'm so tired of this Tonya Harding. I swear to God this is a work. Tonya Harding and this other chick is a work. They got together and they said, "Look..." because you know if you're going to hit her, if you're a paid bodyguard, you don't hit her below the knee, you bust the kneecap. I know the two bitches got together and they worked this whole deal. I swear to God. No one even knew who they were until this happened. Let me tell you something, if I was going to bust someone's knee, I'd make sure they got her knee and not below it and she ain't going to the Olympics. That has got to be the worst, because you know how we were talking about politics and government stuff, we believe what we are told on TV and that has got to be the worst work on TV ever. We don't know what really goes on in other countries. We only know what is brought to us on TV. That's why infocommercials work so good. Because you know you're sitting up in the middle of the night and you see some skinny chick on there going, "Gosh, like I take these diet pills and I rub this on my head and like it gives me hair and then I take these diet pills and they make me really skinny." What they don't know is that she's bulimic and she probably eats and then she goes and barfs, right? It's

all what you see on TV. Wrestling is the infocommercial for you to A, go to the matches, B, buy my calendars, which I don't care about if you buy them or not because they won't even give me any. I called and asked for some, they won't give me any. I have to buy my own now. It's like, "Hi, could y'all send me some calendars so I can give them to my parents." They sent me three. Thank you.

WP: They're losing money. They can't afford to do that.

MH: They can afford to send Missy three. Ahh, I only made them \$300,000 last year off the Hotline.

WP: \$300,000?

MH: That was their cut. The other Hotlines are begging me to go on theirs. They used to get so pissed off at me because I would talk on my Hotline about what I was doing that week or if I went to a hockey game or who I thought was cute, because I would talk about other stuff besides wrestling. Because wrestling gets so boring. So you've got to incorporate it. It was like my little gossip thing. Ooo, ooo, ooo what's going on? Did you ever call my Hotline?

WP: I've heard it.

MH: (laughs) So you never did call it. You wheezed off my Hotline. No wheezing off my Hotline, I'll get very pissed. Well, you know that I talk about other stupid stuff that had no relative business with wrestling. Well, they would come to me, "Well, we didn't like that, what you said." I'm thinking to myself, "I've got the number one Hotline." "Okay, fine whatever you say I won't talk about hockey so much." Next week, "Yo, I was in Montreal, the Stanley Cup playoffs Woo hoo Patrick Waugh." (laughs) The people, they want to know a wrestling person. They want to know them. They want to know a little bit more than what they see on TV. That's what's wrong about wrestling. This is my other analogy of wrestling: Why would anyone in their right minds go to pay \$12 - I don't even know how much it is for a ringside seat in Baltimore - at the matches when

they know all the wrestlers are going to be at the Sheraton bar afterwards? A, without their masks, B, in their jeans being like everyone else. The wrestlers and how I figured this out is that when Jason Hervey, who is like... like if Jason Hervey can make \$100,000 a week, we all should be able to, okay. That's true, because I saw what work he did. He got paid even though he didn't work. He would go in, he would burp or eat peanut butter, burp 20 times - which is very easy for him to do - or sit there and eat peanut butter. He'd come home, "Oh God, I had to eat peanut butter all day." I would look at him and go, "Oh my God, at least you didn't have to drive 500 miles and have wrestling fans spit and snarf and throw nachos at you for 500 bucks. You make 100 grand, I don't want to hear it." There's such a big difference. He would come to Tallahassee, where I'm from, and people would go ballistic because he's somebody they see on TV that they never see in real life. Well, no one's going to pay \$15 if they know they can see that wrestler, if they can see Lex Luger and Sting, any of the guys, if they can see them afterwards being real. What they want to know, they want to get to know you. Why should they go and pay if they don't get to know you? Wrestlers should have always stayed at different hotels. They should have never gone out in public. If you're on TV, you need to act like a television celebrity and that's the bottom line.

I've had people come up to me and once I was at my doctor's. The guy goes to me, "God, you're Missy Hyatt, aren't you? Every time I see you I just want to turn off the TV." I go, "Well you don't do ya?" and he goes, "Ah, ah, ah." and I walked out. Jason goes, "I can't believe you're so mean." I go, "Jason, he's going to tell 10 people that he met Missy Hyatt. What do I want him to say? 'Oh, wow, she was nice' or do I want him to say 'God, she was nasty to me.'" Because everybody knows that's really me. (laughs) It matters if I'm having a good day or a bad day how I'm going to act.

WP: Part of it is people don't want to know

Lex Luger, they want to know the person that plays Lex Luger.

MH: Right. If they know they can find that at the bar afterwards, which believe me all the people go and hang around there after the matches, they're not going to go there and pay. They want... you look at TV and wrestling, the reason why it sells, if you see this person each and every week on TV, wow, once a year of five times a year they're coming to your stadium, Chicago Stadium and they're going to walk by you and just maybe if I'm a girl, "Oh, my God, if I buy a front row ringside seat, Lex Luger will look at me." If I'm a guy, "Boy, I want to go and see how really big that Lex Luger is, because I don't think he is that big. Or I want to see Sting." You know what I'm saying. We're talking this is reality here. It's just like when the Oprah Winfrey show goes on the road. That fat Oprah, she packs in places because people see her everyday (on TV). But to be able to see her in person is so great. But if they knew Oprah Winfrey was going to be down in a restaurant everyday eating, she's not going to be special. If you go down there and watch her stuff her face with mashed potatoes, we're not going to want to see her. If the business would kayfabe more and treat their people like celebrities... Do you know I've been at the Center Stage for four years and trying to find a place to change clothes or even go to the bathroom is always a hard problem because I never even had a dressing room? How people are treated, how they are perceived, that's what you get back. If you were treated like a celebrity and treated like a star, if you were to A, you don't go out and hang out and do this. You do not do this kind of stuff.

WP: But when Bill Watts tried that, it went over very poorly with the wrestlers. Particularly the rule about babyfaces and heels socializing together.

MH: No, you know what I would say? I would say you don't go down to the bar where the fans are. You go and do your match and then you go to your room. Also, my philosophy is, they've gone to all these house shows and everything. I say you

don't go to Chicago like they're doing right now. You only do TV. If you starve someone long enough, they have to eat. Then you do your big shows in Chicago. You do your big shows in the big places so you don't have to paper them to sell them. I have my own philosophy of how I would run the company. But like they would listen to a woman, no way because they have no balls. They don't want to think that a woman has brains. But why should I tell you all my secrets? I'll save them for another adventure that I might do one day. But it won't be wrestling. Read my book.

WP: So I won't be able to pry from you how you would run the company?

MH: That's what I just said, I would have my stars be stars. I would have Sting and all my other celebrities instead of going to Chicago and doing wrestling, I wouldn't have them all go into Chicago. I'd have them first train everyday. I wouldn't have them on the road because I don't believe in being on the road. I would turn everyone AFTRA and make them scale and make everyone players like you do in a regular television show so you get paid scale. All the guys that put people over, I'd treat them with a lot more respect than what they do get treated with. I'd have a school. A lot better school than what they have.

WP: You don't like what Jody Hamilton's doing?

MH: You know what? I don't like it so much I ain't never been down there to see it because nothing has ever impressed me to even want to take my butt down there because I know it's dirty and it's nasty. How I would do it, I would get an awesome PR company. You know how we did the Vicki Lawrence show? I'd have Sting in Chicago doing celebrity things. Doing golf tournaments, doing benefits. Jason Hervey, he got to go on more free trips. The only reason why we went on free trips for stuff was because we'd get gimmicks. We'd get free Reebok tennis shoes. We'd go to a tennis tournament, we'd get free tennis racquets. We'd go and do a car racing event and we'd get all kinds of cool bags

and stuff. That's the only reason why we went to surfing events. We did the Ted Danson surfing thing twice because we got cool wet suits. Send our guys and make them celebrities. Then they get on Entertainment Tonight. Did you ever see *Hard Copy*? I was on *Hard Copy* a bunch of times. They replayed it three or four times with Jason. I'd have my guys going to Hollywood premieres, movie premieres, the stuff where the cameras are at. I'd have them celebrities. Then I would have them go to places that have never had wrestling. So you go to an outdoor arena in some little town. That's how Texas made so much money. We would go to these small high schools and outdoor arenas and there would be 10,000 people there and doing it because a lot of people are there because you're buying band uniforms for the band and they've never seen wrestling. You go to these places that are starved, they haven't seen wrestling. They've seen wrestling on TV for two years and have never gotten to see Sting. They live 200 miles away from Chicago and they can't go. So you send them on a picnic tour every once in a while. So bring them to Chicago, go to a golf tournament, get in the car, rent a car, go down the road and you do a little show like that. So it's an outdoor arena. You make it big. Make it once a year, a never-going-to-be-there-ever-again event. Then, maybe in a year or two, maybe I'll go to Chicago. But I'll do Chicago as a pay-per-view or something. If you starve them long enough, don't tell me those rats and all those marks that haven't gotten to see you and see all these people on TV aren't going to go and pay.

WP: Which is what Jim Cornette has done with Smoky Mountain. He's taken areas that haven't seen wrestling in 15 to 20 years.

MH: Oh, yeah, those areas are going crazy and Jim Cornette's very smart. What happens is in the booking committee in a booking situation, you start an idea and what you do, you need to get a big board and you need to put your people's names on it of who you want to go with who and

you need to run programs and you need to know the start, the beginning, the middle, what's going to happen, the blow-off and how the blow-off is going to go into something else. But once you do that, you stick with it. But what happens in a booking situation when you have all these men that are stabbing each other in the back because they all think they're so smart and intelligent. They're going, "Oh, yeah, that's a great idea," and the guy turns around and they look and go, "Aw, that idea's going to suck." So they start an idea, get halfway done, then switch it totally and the people that are home are going, "Huh?" The reason why Jim Cornette's stuff is working is because he has it scripted out, what is going to happen each and every week and it's a story line. Tell me they didn't screw up when I was on Vicki Lawrence on a Monday and the day before I was in the Mayo Clinic getting my teeth scraped, huh? I'll be on TV for the next month. Tell me whoever thought of that needs a little....

Whoever thought of having Maxx Payne and Cactus Jack babyfaces? Excuse, excuse me, but I'm a woman and like they're gross. They should be bad guys. The Nasty Boys should be bad guys. You should have your Z-Mans, you should have gorgeous looking babyfaces that make me want to go and pay \$15 to go sit ringside hoping that one of those guys will look at me. (laughs) Let's get reality here. Let's have a bad guy that is good looking kind of, but that's a real jerk the guys that are out there that are not very good looking will be envious of him. But also, have a good guy that they can really appreciate so when that really good guy beats up the other envious looking guy, they can be happy because they always wanted to do that. There's always somebody in school.

My perfect example is I had no friends in school and when I go home to Tallahassee, people come up to me, "Hi, Missy, don't you remember me? We went to school together." It's like, "No, should I? The only reason why you're talking to me now is because I'm on television and you're with your husband or friend and you want to impress them by saying you went

to school with me. I don't remember you, get out of my face." It's true.

WP: *Fame brings lots of friends you never knew you had.*

MH: You're exactly right. I think everyone in wrestling needs to be celebrities. Gorgeous George. Oh, my God, he drew. He was on TV because Gorgeous George, if he came to your town, he was on TV, wouldn't you pay to see him? If Gorgeous George was going to be out their plucking Peacock feather or something or whatever those feathers were or whatever he did?

Did you hear about the Prodigy thing? I was on Prodigy for a while saying it was me and there was a big scandal. They said it wasn't me, but it was me. I was only renting a computer for a couple of months so now I've got to go buy one because they gave me a year free because they felt so bad. They global locked me because they thought I was impersonating someone. Like, yo, if I'm going to impersonate someone, I'm going to impersonate Madonna. (laughs) Like I'd impersonate Missy Hyatt. (sustained laughter)

We were just talking about Michael Jackson. God, he is too pretty. He is. I'd love to put some red shoes on him, tease his hair out, put a red dress on him. Uh, huh, I'd take him out dancing.

Girlfriend.

WP: *As someone said, Michael Jackson and George Hamilton have crossed paths on the pigmentation scale.*

MH: I'm sure, in a big way. Speaking of Hamilton, can you believe that Shannon Doherty would dump Judd (Nelson)? Well, not dump, Judd said he dumped her. She says she dumped him. Can you believe she would go out with and would marry Ashley Hamilton? After having Judd? Oh, you can tattoo a big L on her forehead.

WP: *Julia Roberts married Lyle Lovett.*

MH: I know. Let me tell you something. Women, we've come to the conclusion, I mean Judd's not that good looking. I'm talking about other things. I think he's sexy. His voice and everything. Well, Julia's not that good looking at all. Boni (Blackstone) and I were talking about that. She can walk out, cry a little bit. Boo hoo. They say she's a great actress. But what about the old movies? Let's take a *Seven Year Itch* or let's pull out *Some Like It Hot* where an actress had to dance, sing, move and entertain you. Julia just runs around. Oh, God, that one movie, *Ghost*, if Demi Moore cried one more time, I'd like to punch her face in. All she did was cry. That's what I'm saying. If Jason Hervey

can make 100 grand an episode, we all can.

WP: *So you are a big Marilyn Monroe fan?*

MH: Kind of, yeah. Madonna, I love Madonna. You know who I love too? Rosanne Arnold. She's a woman, she owns her own show, and she can tell producers to kiss her butt and she's a woman. I respect Rosanne Arnold in a big way. She left her husband, so she married Tom and everyone said it was a farce and they do all the wild and crazy things that she does. Rosanne can do whatever she wants because she has money. That's like Madonna. Madonna can come out with a sex book. She could go out with a 16-year-old guy and no one can say a thing because she can. (laughs) I like that. She can walk into Warner Brothers and say, "Excuse me, but I want \$10,000,000 and I'll do a book and I'll do a video and I'll do this, that and the other. Give it to me or I'll go." And they go, "Okay, okay, okay." You have people who are equally as talented, because dammit, if I could sing, it would be Missy instead of Madonna. But I cannot sing. But if I were to try and go in to a weenie-ass company. Weenie with a big W Broadcasting, and go "Yo, am I fired or what or am I getting the contract renewal or what?" And they go, "Get out of here." You know it's the difference the way they treat people.

Potshots From Around The World - By Bill "Potshot" Kunkel

The Next WWF?

Every day I talk to friends who are in contact, through various means, with WCW. To hear them talk about it, Eric Bischoff is already popping the corks on the Sparklett's bottles.

"They have a plan," one associate reported. "They intend to be number one by the end of the year."

"Hey, they've got it all," another chum opined. "Okerland, Heenan, Jesse, and now Hogan. How do they miss?"

How do they miss?

How, indeed.

For those interested in how WCW will, in

fact, blow its opportunity to replace the sagging (one count forward, two counts backwards) WWF, all that is required is a quick comparison between the most recent PPVs offered by the two companies.

But before all that, let's not forget that there are suddenly other contenders out there for the PPV dollar, and their product,

if not superior in every way, is at least different and refreshing. I'm talking about Shoot Wrestling and the superbly entertaining Ultimate Fighting Championships and several other bogus clones of the "real" wrestling/street fighting contests. These folks are genuine players and are bound to soak up some of the PPV money that might otherwise have gone toward a WWF or WCW PPV. Further, the hardcores, the people who have been the loyalist of loyalists in the NWA/WCW camp (i.e. Big Chumps) are those most strongly tempted and thrilled by this new type of combat.

Let's say, however, that there was only the WWF and WCW. Fine. Let's say WCW has all the talent while Vince McMahon is busy defending himself against charges that could put him inside and leave his company in tatter.

Vince's PPV still left Bischoff's *Spring Stampede* looking like amateur hour.

In the first place, if you're holding something called a *Spring Stampede* with the cowboy motif and all, it would make sense to stage the event in a city that has some association in the public mind with cowboys and stampedes and ropin' and brandin'. Anyone who has seen Chicago's cattle pens can attest that a Wild West feeling is the last thing it evokes.

Chicago is about cows, not cowboys.

Now as to all that fabled beef in WCW's meaty locker: If Johnny B. Badd gets any staler, he is simply going to crack in half. Put this puppy to sleep. Diamond Dallas Page, on the other hand, has a unique gimmick and a fresh persona. It made no logical sense for Badd to win the opener. Steve Regal and Brian Pillman, meanwhile, had a good match that didn't mean much and went to a time limit draw - the first portent that we had paid a visit to Screwjob City, and not the Land Where Every Match Tells A Story.

The Nasty Boys versus the Jack of Pain did tell a story. The story, unfortunately, was *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. If Jack is going to have his ears rebuilt for four months, I suppose it makes minimal sense for him to do the job, but the idea is now set in concrete that not only can the Nasty Boys beat Jack of Pain in a regular match, they can also waste them in "their" favorite type of match. They did however, use the shovel appropriately, as this should bury Jack's career.

Steve Austin and the Great Muta are certainly talented wrestlers, but what in Inoki's name were they doing fighting one another on this card? To add another screwjob finish? I was hurling little green mist myself by the end of this dud.

Sting and Rick Rude. Sting and Rick Rude. Hmm, now where have I seen that match before? Oh, yeah, right, on every PPV and Clash for the past year, not to mention a dozen or so meetings on TV. Very fresh. Haven't you guys ever heard of caretaker champions? Have somebody else beat Rude, who then gets beat by a heel who Sting defeats for the strap. By that point, we may have forgotten that Sting and Rude have fought more than the Rock and Roll Express and the Midnight Express, and Rude will seem an interesting challenger - the guy Sting could never quite beat.

Now we have Jimmy Golden Bunkhouse Buck and the Plumber's Grandson, Dustin Rhodes. The longer this match went on, the more certain I became that I could kick Buck's scrawny butt. He looks like the kind of runt who beats on his wife to feel like a man and the idea of him having credibility against a guy Dustin's size and caliber is just plain ridiculous. Clean finish. Another bloodbath. Ted Turner Family-Style Entertainment at its reddest.

Then Vader moonsaults Bossman, who has his gimmick, cuffs and name taken away from him. Bad Boss. BAD Boss. You can have them back when you learn to

play nice - or when we sign a deal with the WWF. Notice how every time Vince barks, WCW still backs down?

Then we have the main event. Two fine craftsmen in a match that they almost make people care about in spite of the fact that there was no real reason that they should. In the presence of four witnesses (two of who host a wrestling radio show), I predicted and counted down the number of near-falls and predicted the positioning of the final fall with uncanny (and somewhat alarming) precision. What I could not predict was that they would stray from the textbook finish where Flair subtly lifts his left arm before the three count and a hand-held camera catches it on replay. Instead, they had Nick Bockwinkel offer an explanation that makes Jack Tunney sound like a candidate for *The McLaughlin Group* (Morton Kondracke is already a Jim Cornette clone).

But forget the parts, it's the overall impact that matters here: We had a PPV and nothing happened. No significant plot lines were closed out, nothing new was started with the exception of Vader vs. Rude. That in itself was obvious since Sting has also fought Vader 10,000 times and Sting's another wrestler who needs to have some water sprayed on him before he gets brittle. No plot lines were advanced so much as an iota. Even Hulk Hogan no-showed after unconscionable teasing.

Nothing happened.

Wrestling is supposed to be an ongoing, dynamic process. You don't charge people \$25 and then tell them they can see the outcome of the main event next weekend for free. It defies logic.

That is why WCW will never take over anything. Because they can have that bald-headed, former steroid abusing, awful acting Terry "Hulk" Hogan and Mean Gene with his shameless shilling for the 900 line, and everybody in McMahon's stable and you know what?

McMahon will still beat them. He's a rat bastard and, I believe, a truly evil man who deserved to go to jail and rot there, but he still has the greatest wrestling mind of his generation. All of Ted's horses and all of Ted's men will never have an idea half as good as most of McMahon's turkeys.

Bischoff is a poseur who sure didn't get where he is today by knowing what he's

doing. mean Gene is a lecherous and pointedly nasty little gargoyle who will, in all likelihood, eventually take down Bischoff in a power play. "Sorry Eric, but my Hulk of Hogan beats your entire hand." Yet, none of it matters. WCW is the same poop kicking, pumped-up regional operation it always was. They make the same dumb mistakes they always have. They screw up cities the same way and

they keep re-hiring the same lunatics to run the asylum, frequently by committee.

So don't worry McMahon. When you finish those two years or so of tennis and push-ups and say goodbye to your boyfriends, the wrestling world will still be waiting for you.

WCW sure isn't going to take it away.

THE PHANTOM OF THE RING TOONS OF THE TIMES

Over the last few years, a new feeling has dawned on me: I'm embarrassed to be a wrestling fan. That's right, I'm embarrassed. Why, you may ask? Simple, I've come to the realization that wrestling is a sport/entertainment/game, have what you will, that is no longer aimed at me. It is aimed at my nine-year-old nephew. He is the chosen target audience, inasmuch as wrestling has shifted emphasis from hawking the next big or small town card to hawking the next pay-per-view and, just as important, merchandise. On the old days, television bouts were used to support live bouts. Now they're used to support pay-per-view atrocities like *Wrestlemania*, *Summer Slam* and *Starrcade*, which in turn are used to support Nintendo, Slim Jims, catalogs et al. Kids, such as my nephew, have an overwhelming appetite for this sort of material, and merchandise brings better returns than live cards. Yet the irony is that wrestling has no choice but to target this audience since they burned their bridges with the yuppie crowd they once courted.

Bill Kunkel wrote a brilliant column in these pages a short while ago tracing the current malaise in wrestling to the introduction of Zeus as a real wrestler. I also trace wrestling's Waterloo, and the

beginning of decline of current interest, to Vince McMahon's brainstorm of using wrestling as a catalyst for a brave new world of feature films that his empire was to grind out.

Keep in mind that this multi-media approach worked once before with the world of rock music and videos. McMahon's wrestling album sold well and videos of previous pay-per-view events were more than holding their own. McMahon might have well succeeded in this venture had he made a decent movie. Instead, what he made was a wretched, almost unmatchable bomb entitled *No Holds Barred*. This movie was so bad it didn't even score well with the kiddie audience and left the theaters in a matter of weeks. Yes, it made money. But remember, it was made on a shoestring budget. The fact is, that for all the hype and push it received, *No Hold Barred* should have grossed much more than it did.

Everything should have ended there. The smart thing for McMahon to do was to say that he did a film, forget about the experience and plow on ahead as if nothing had happened.

To his everlasting detriment, McMahon couldn't just let the thing die. It would seem, upon viewing the film, that McMahon had several storylines planned. If the film had been a hit, these storylines might just have worked. Notice I said "might." I think what it really would have come down to was that the excesses of these storylines just might have been overlooked or seen by the yuppie crowd as additional camp in what they already saw as the campiest sport. In any case, this is treading in dangerous waters; never underestimate your audience. But as the film was not the hit it was expected to be, McMahon's decision to press on with these storylines was a grotesque error, and ultimately led to a fall in wrestling's popularity.

The worst of his decisions was to push the character of Zeus, a totally fictional character, as a real wrestler. This may have been a reaction to salvage something out of the debacle. My perception has always been that Zeus was to oppose Hogan at *Wrestlemania* if the film was a hit. Instead, it seemed that come hell or high water, McMahon was determined to make this match happen.

When Kunkel pointed out that this was the

act over which McMahon began to lose his grip on the popular cultural imagination, he could not have been more correct. Zeus with a hit film behind him would have been bad enough, but would have been laughed off. Zeus with a dud behind him was seen as something beyond parody; as if McMahon was laughing at his audience.

Now before I begin hearing that I've somehow gone off my rocker, that I'm making far too much of this than is possible, I want you to consider the facts. Of the people I've talked to who used to be wrestling fans, most told me they lost their interest during the time of Zeus and with the Warrior being made champion at the subsequent Wrestlemania. Though it is possible that they would have lost interest anyway, it seems important that they would mention Zeus, as well as the Warrior, in a distasteful light. Also consider that McMahon was riding high in those halcyon days. He scored a coup with his *Saturday*

Night's Main Event on NBC, he had a Saturday morning cartoon show on CBS, and wrestling was in with the "in-crowd," who viewed it as diverting high-camp entertainment. Suddenly, they saw their intelligence insulted and acted accordingly.

Zeus himself proved to be no bargain. He was hard to handle, had no wrestling ability and even less charisma. Had common sense been allowed to rule instead of McMahon's ego, Zeus would have been buried in the record files along with the likes of Mighty Joe Thunder, Ripper Hawkins and the Gladiator of Crete. But McMahon kept right on pushing the big stiff until finally realizing that the box office returns were not nearly enough to justify the headaches the guy caused, and so fired Mr. Zeus on December 17, 1989. So, following one mistake with another, McMahon built a misunderstanding between the Ultimate Warrior and Hulk

Hogan that resulted in the Warrior's winning the belt at Wrestlemania and destroying both wrestlers' popularity in the process. I don't think the WWF has ever really rebounded from that setback.

In any event, it caused the WWF to become even more cartoonish, as the target audience shifted from the no-longer interested young adults to cartoon influenced pre-teens. The result: it has caused me to lose interest because even I can't justify the goings-on any longer. Recently, a co-worker and I were talking about wrestling. "You know," he said, "I recently saw that guy, the Undertaker, in a match. His opponent had him flat, his manager would wave that urn and the Undertaker would magically get better. It was the silliest crap I ever saw. How do you watch this stuff?"

I couldn't answer him. I didn't have an answer.

Letters To The Editors

As per the Leighton dictum I have witnessed all of the wrestlers on my Yokozuna list.

Dutch Rhode - He stood for excellence whether it be drawing heat, drawing money or being exciting. He protected the business.

Killer Kowalski - He was able to make you fear for his opponent, a rare ability.

Gorgeous George - In truly repressed times, George was a trail blazer. A showman with entrance music and costumes. Spraying perfume on the wretched masses by his valet paved the way for put-down interviews by the likes of Blassie, Cornette and Fytch. As an aside, Fred Kohler fired me from my first

and only paying job in wrestling for pushing George.

Lou Thesz - When you got to see him, which was infrequently, you felt you had witnessed the best pure wrestler.

Chief Don Eagle - A great worker, an early flier and so emulated that he inspired kids to get Mohawk haircuts.

Sky Low Low, Fuzzy Cupid and Lord Littlebrook all helped to make midget wrestling an art form.

*Dr. Richard Siegel,
Bethpage, NY*

P & D. For those of you who do not know,

Wrestling Perspective has been running letters from our readers on whom they think are the true the Yokozunas of professional wrestling (in sumo wrestling, Yokozuna is the grand champion). As noted by Steve Yohie, who came up with this wonderful idea, the grand champion, or Yokozuna is more than just a great wrestler, he is someone who is also honored for his character and dignity, hence many wrestler end up being disqualified. In issue #41, Rodney Leighton sensibly pointed out that when picking a Yokozuna, people should limit their selections to wrestlers they have actually seen wrestle. We encourage our readers to contribute to this forum, as it's quite interesting and a fun list to create. Readers are also encouraged to contribute to our "Letters To The Editors" column regarding articles or interviews they read in Wrestling Perspective, or other issues in professional wrestling they deem important.

Next Issue:

- Part III Of The Missy Hyatt Interview
- The Phantom Looks At Jim Londos
- Much More...
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